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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/896,471	06/29/2001	Mary F. Hollinger	60027.0004US01/BS00318	9254
39262	7590	02/28/2006		
BELLSOUTH CORPORATION			EXAMINER	
P.O. BOX 2903			LIN, WEN TAI	
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402-0903			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2154	

DATE MAILED: 02/28/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/896,471	HOLLINGER ET AL.
	Examiner Wen-Tai Lin	Art Unit 2154

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 January 2006.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 1-6,8,10-17 and 20-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 1-6,8,10-17 and 20-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-6, 8, 10-17 and 20-22 are presented for examination.
2. The text of those sections of Title 35, USC code not included in this action can be found in the prior Office Action.
3. In response to Applicant's request for evidentiary support, it is noted that the prior art of Doherty [U.S. PGPub 20040190699] is being used as a secondary reference replacing the previous Official Notice.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

4. Claims 1-6, 8, 10-17 and 20-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gabbita et al.(hereafter "Gabbita") [U.S. Pat. No. 6349238] in view of Doherty [U.S. PGPub 20040190699].
5. As to claim 1, Gabbita teaches the invention substantially as claimed including: an appointment setting system for assigning a service order to a network resource [e.g., col.2, lines 29-57], comprising:

an appointment negotiator [e.g., 134, 136 (LSC), Fig.1C] operative to receive a service order from a customer and deliver an appointment confirmation and an appointment rejection to the customer [e.g., steps 7-9, 19, Fig.4; col.18, lines 35-50; note that, by default, confirmation/rejection of an original service order must be sent to the customer];

a dispatch database operative to maintain a dispatch database record of appointments previously assigned to the network resource [104, Fig.1; col.4, lines 56-61];

an appointment control system operative to receive the service order from the appointment negotiator [204, Fig.2];

determine whether the network resource can fulfill the service order [206 -212, Fig.2]; and

assign an appointment associated with the service order to the network resource and send an appointment confirmation to the appointment negotiator in response to a determination that the network resource can fulfill the service order [214-220, Fig.2];

determine whether a change has occurred to the dispatch database record associated with the network resources; determine whether the change affects the appointment associated with the service orders in response to a determination that a change to the dispatch database record associated with the network resource has occurred; and reassign the appointment associated with the service order to another network resources in response to a determination that the change to the dispatch record associated with the network resource affects the appointment associated with the service order [col.18, lines 51-64; note that detecting changes of resources and reassigning tasks to other available resources is part of the load balancing effort].

Gabbita disclosed that authorized users might log into the system and reassigned the work steps as necessary. Gabbita does not specifically teach that reassigning the appointment for the above load balancing steps is performed automatically.

However, in the same field of endeavor, Doherty teaches a system for automatically provisioning telecommunication services with the capability of rescheduling an installation service when certain resources (e.g., technicians) become unavailable [Abstract; paragraphs 9, 28 35 and 38].

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made that the load balancing steps (for redistributing resources) in Gabbita's system can also be performed automatically because the system has already automated a majority of the work steps [e.g., 414, Fig.4; col.14, lines 56-64; col.19, lines 41-53] and by allowing the system to automatically perform the reassignment steps it would facilitate the work progress and reduce human errors.

6. As to claim 2, Gabbita further teaches that the appointment control system is a computer-implemented system that is electronically accessible by the appointment negotiator [LSAT, Fig.1A; Fig.1B].

7. As to claims 3-5, Gabbita further teaches that the dispatch database record is an electronic record comprising a network resource schedule, a set of tasks to which the network resource can be assigned and appointments assigned to another network resource [104, Fig.1; col.4, lines 56-61].

8. As to claims 6 and 8, Gabbita further teaches that the appointment control system is further operative to determine deliver the appointment rejection to the appointment negotiator, in response to a determination that the network resource cannot fulfill the service order and would thereby affect the original appointment confirmation [e.g., 350-356, Fig.3; col.21, lines 44-51].

9. As to claim 10, Gabbita further teaches that the appointment control system is further operative to receive the service order from a third party through a third party gateway [e.g., 118-120, Fig.1A; i.e., the third party residing on anywhere in the Internet can be connected to the appointment control system LSAT].

10. As to claim 11, since the features of this claim can also be found in claims 1-6, 8 and 10, it is rejected for the same reasons set forth in the rejection of claims 1-6, 8 and 10 above.

11. As to claims 14-15, Gabbita further teaches that the step of determining whether a network resource can fulfill the service order comprises accessing the dispatch database to determine whether the network resource can be near the appointment location approximately at the appointment time or is committed to another service order at the appointment time [note that this is an inherent process in arranging an appointment].

12. As to claim 16, Gabbita further teaches that the step of updating a dispatch database to reflect a reduction in a capacity value associated with the network resource comprises modifying

a dispatch database record to indicate a commitment of the network resource to perform the service task at the appointment time and at the appointment location [note that it is inherent that Gabbita's database maintenance process needs to update its content after an appointment is made].

13. As to claims 12-13, 17 and 20-22, since the features of these claims can also be found in claims 1-6, 8, 10-11 and 14-15, they are rejected for the same reasons set forth in the rejection of claims 1-6, 8, 10-11 and 14-15 above.

14. Applicant's arguments filed on 1/17/2006 for claims 1-6, 8, 10-17 and 20-22 have been fully considered but they are not deemed to be persuasive.

15. In the remarks Applicant argues that: (i) Gabbita fails to disclose sending an appointment confirmation (or rejection) to the appointment negotiator and to the customer (who requested the appointment); and (ii) Applicant request evidentiary support for the Official Notice taken in rejecting the feature of automatically reassigning an appointment in view of resource changes.

In response to argument point (i): Applicant is reminded that in the previous (and current) office action the feature of confirming/rejecting an appointment is considered inherent in Gabbita's system (in view of the system's characteristic disclosed, e.g., in Abstract lines 16-23). In other words, the office actions take the stand that Gabbita's appointment-making step must be able to confirm/reject an appointment to a customer who requests for the service.

In response to argument point (ii): see paragraphs 3 and 5 above.

16. THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

17. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Conclusion

Examiner note: Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers in the references as applied to the claims above for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings of the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant in preparing responses, to fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Wen-Tai Lin whose telephone number is (571)272-3969. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday(8:00-5:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Follansbee can be reached on (571)272-3964. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are as follows:

(571)273-8300 for official communications; and

(571)273-3969 for status inquires draft communication.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Wen-Tai Lin

February 21, 2006


2/21/06